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CAMBRIANA.—No. II.

ARTHUR'S TOMB.

THE following curious account of the discovery of Arthur's Tomb is extracted from "The Ancient History of Great Britain by John Lewis, Esq.," published in 1721, and is obviously a compilation from Geoffrey and other old writers. Its authenticity, therefore, is to be taken *cum grano salis*; but it is not on that account the less entitled to a place among the CAMBRIANA, with respect to the particular design of which the reader is referred to the seventeenth Number of this work p. 222. The orthography and other particulars of the original are strictly preserved in the following extract.

* * *

"And now, touching king Arthur's Burial,—King Arthur was buried at Glastenbury, in the Church yard, betweene two pillars of stone, and found, Ann. Dom. 1191, in the last yeare of the reign of Henry II, more than 600 yeares after the burial, 16 fote depe in the ground, for fear, lest his enemies, the Saxons, should have found him. The diggers of the grave, at the depth of seven fote in the earth, found a mighty brode stone with a cross of lead fastened to that side, which lay downwarde towards the corps, and an inscription being on the innerside of leade, next the stone as followeth :—

"*Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in Insula Analonia* cum Wenevera†, uxore sua secundā.*"

"His body was found, not enclosed within a tomb of marble, or other stone, curiously wrought, but within a great tre, made hollow like a trunk; which, being found and digged up, was opened and therein were found the King's bones of maveinous bignes, that the shyn bone of his leg, being set on the ground, reached up to the middle of the thigh of a taul man, as a monk of that abbey hath written who lived in those daies and saw it. But Giraldus Cambrensis, who lived in those daies and spake with the Abbot of the place, by whom the bones were found, affirmeth by report of the same Abbot, that the shyn bone of the said Arthur, being set up by the leg of a very tall man (the which the Abbot shewed to Giraldus), cam above the kne of the same man thre fingers breadth. Furthermore, the scul of his head was of a

* Properly *Avalonia*.—ED.

† *Gwenhwyfar*.—ED.

wonderful largnes, so as the space of his forehead, betwixt his two eyes, was a span brodé. Ther apeare in his skul the signes and printes of ten wounds or more, al which were growen into one wem, except only that, which seemed to be his death's wound, which, being greater than the rest, apeared very plain. Also, in opening the tomb of his wif buried with him, they found the tresses of her hayre ful and perfect, finly platted, of colour like the burnished gould, which, being touched, immediately fel to dust. The Abbot, who then was head of the House, cauled Stephen, or Henry, de Blois, or de Sully, nephew to King Henry II., by whos commaundment he had serched for the grave of Arthur, translated the bones of the King and Quene into the great church, and ther buried them in a fair double tomb of marble, laieng the body of the King at the head of the tomb, and the body of the Queen at the fete, towards the west part. The writer of the History of Cambria, or Cymbri, saieth, that the bones of the King and Quene were found in the Isle of Analon*, (which is of Aples), without the Abbey of Glastenbury, 15 fote within the ground, and that the grave was found by means of a bard, whom the King heard at Pembrok, singing the actes of King Arthur, and the place of his burial.

“By that, which hath been said, it apeareth, that this was another Gwenhwyfar than the adultres, who married Mordred †. And to make any matter, whether the tre, wherein King Arthur was buried, was an oke or an alder, I think it vain. Giraldus saieth it was an oke, Powel an alder. The British and Scottish history agre, that King Arthur lived in the daies of Justinian, the Emperor, and died about 15 years after his raig, Ann. Dom. 542: Vitus saieth in the 21st yeare of his raig, Powel in the 26th yeare. Leland, a worthy antiquary, hath gathered many aparent proufs of King Arthur and his noble actes.”

WELSH METRES ‡.

“Poetry and good language were in greater perfection in Wales a little before and a little after the Norman Conquest than they have been since; and the historical part of our poems is a great

* Avalon.—Ed.

† According to the ancient Welsh records Arthur had three wives of the name of Gwenhwyfar, and one called Gwenhwyfach. Mordred, here mentioned, must be a mistake for Medrawd, whose traitorous conspiracy against Arthur is recorded in the Triads.—Ed.

‡ Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales, p. 67 in the Notes.